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JULY 1998 Vol. 5 No. 7
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Our Voice the spare change magazine



Ken Ward EAGLE BOY

New book with a strong voice for aboriginals with HIV

Street initiative of a gallery gathering place for youth

Are you tired of the man telling you where you can and can't go? Are you a youth under the age of 18? Well thanks to the energy and vision of some dynamic young citizens, the Gallery is here.

Started about two years ago (after a group of kids were told they were not welcome after 8 p.m. at a local coffee bar on their poetry night), the Gallery was started as a collective

group for youth by youth. The group is 150 members strong and is headstrong on giving youth in Edmonton a chance artistically to have their voices heard.

"Our big focus is the fine arts and art in general, says secretary of the group, Fred Eee. Fred, the only original member from the group's inception, says that the group is trying to gain enough momentum and funds to eventually open a youth-owned and operated cafe. "We have support from all the businesses on Whyte Avenue plus the Old Strathcona Foundation and the Old Strathcona Business Association."

The cafe will be used to showcase the artistic talents of youth in Edmonton, through visuals, music and poetry. Past fund-raisers have seen pop and coffee bars set up at the Bus Barns with local and touring bands playing for the all-ages crowd and the opportunity for the crowd to engage in an open jam with other musicians. The cafe will circumvent having to rent a space for the fund-raisers. The organization

is completely non-profit, taking whatever funds amassed and returning it back into exposes of this city's youth and their talent.

Although the Gallery takes up a large chunk of her time, Fred who is only 15 also seems to have time for school (correspondence), a part-time job at the hip new clothing and record store on Whyte Ave., Hexed, as well as a full-time job at the Old Strathcona Foundation as their summer coordinator organizing this year's Silly Summer Parade.

"I just want to prove that were not just rodent youth with no hopes; we have hopes and dreams and directions in our lives that we want to fulfill." She explains that the Gallery group is free to join and membership entitles you to a vote at group meetings. The only catch is you can't be over the age of 18 if you want to vote.

Fred wants to keep the group adult-free, even though it means slightly diminishing their chances of gaining respect and acceptance. Some organizations and grant funders



require adult supervision and membership to be considered at all; but for Fred, that just means she has to work extra

hard at getting the group to be heard. ♦

by Brent Oliver.
PHOTO: John Zepantis

Our Voice

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OUR VOICE is published to provide an income opportunity for economically marginalized people in our society while communicating about their issues to the public.

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OUR VOICE is a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association **NASNA**.

Michael Walters new Our Voice editor

Just over three years after beginning with **Our Voice** in the distribution office, writer, poet and poetry organizer Michael Walters is taking over the top job of Managing Editor. "I really believe in this project, and I have a vision of how good a publication it can be," says Michael.

Keith Wiley, who has been editor since the first Alberta Spare Change edition in 1994, is bowing out for a lesser role handling only the design and production of the magazine. "It's been a wonderful whirl," says Keith. "It's been an honour to work on a project that does help people in a most basic way. And it's been very interesting to evolve a niche for the magazine. We have tried out a lot of hats here, but finally, I think the one that fits I call connecting communities. **Our Voice** works as a way for a particularly disempowered community to tell their stories."

Our Voice is not a big production. For nearly a year Keith and Michael have been the whole production staff, working with vendors and the writers and volunteers.

"Michael knows everything about the project and he has the energy to take it new places," says Keith. ♦



Brent Dodging Horse helps open Calgary **Our Voice** office at Friendship Centre

The hot forward for the Calgary Hit Men Hockey team, Brent Dodging Horse (centre, in cap, above), came down to help inaugurate the **Our Voice** office in the Calgary Native Friendship Centre. Friends and well-wishers came along too to get Brent's autograph and participate in the blessing of the office. Thanks to elder Antoinette Van Hesendonk and everyone who came out to the office opening. ♦

Send us to Montreal meeting

The big meeting of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA) is going to gather people from projects like **Our Voice** from all across the continent this summer. The meeting is in Montreal and **Our Voice** desperately needs some help with plane fares so we can send two people to the conference. Michael Walters and long-time vendor and contributor Linda Dumont are signed up for the conference, but we're short \$500 for the tickets. Any contributions or suggestions would be warmly appreciated, and tax deductible. ♦



MANY native people are in high risk groups for contracting HIV... the modern killer disease. Living in poverty, over-represented in jails and on "the streets", more and more aboriginal people are getting sick. One man who is doing something about it is Ken Ward, Eagle Boy. Since he was diagnosed as HIV positive in 1989 Ken's life has become a crusade to warn "Indian country" about the newest disease. He has spoken to hundreds of groups, young people, prisoners, street people and prostitutes. Now some of his words are in a new book... *And Who Will Hear Their Cries?*

"Coming from the street life to something like this certainly changed the direction of my life," says Ken in an *Our Voice* interview. "I didn't do it alone. There were a lot of people who helped pick up the pieces for me, helped me do what I need for myself to carry on. All I had to do was ask."

Back in the summer of 1989, Ken says he had been drug-free for about five years. "I was in Vancouver for a week, and I met this one fellow. Since I was new in town I needed a friend. I picked the one guy who happened to be diagnosed." Ken said they shared a needle to inject drugs. "I wasn't promiscuous at all, but I was a user. One bang (injection) won't hurt you, he said, but one bang did hurt me."

That man has since died of AIDs complications, and that December 28, Ken learned he was HIV positive. He says there were two ways he could go. "A lot of survivors, warriors of the heart tend to commit suicide, or OD (overdose), feeling 'what's the use.' I felt I still have something to offer."

His journey was not an easy one, but the next year Ken got help, major help through a personal spiritual awakening. It had taken years for Ken to recover his "Indianness". Put in foster care as a child, his life was hard, as he says "in the foster home circuits". At one point he was raped by an older man. Ken is very

fair, with long blonde hair, he didn't know he was aboriginal until he turned 18, and was sent "home" to his reserve. But it wasn't until 1990 with the "death sentence" of HIV over his head, that Ken embraced the native spirituality that gives him his strength.

"I used to have a lifestyle, my gosh, I was transitory, going from city to city, looking for a dream. I could use shoving needles in my arm as an excuse, because of my past... I could blame the government for taking me away as a kid, I had to deal with a lot of personal issues in my past. But I was the one who shoved the needle in my arm, I was the one responsible, I made the choice, I wasn't too aware of HIV, but I knew the risks." But to go on, Ken realized he had to forgive himself and get on with life. "I was determined not to pack it in."

Then Ken went "public" as the first aboriginal person to be diagnosed. "The most important thing was that one eagle feather I got. I received the feather from elders in Alberta because I chose to go public about being HIV positive. That eagle feather became my companion and my teacher, because of what it means to receive an eagle feather, the pride and the honouring of life. That became my code of ethics, and I think I have years to live because of that."

THOSE turned into years of public speaking to native groups across Canada and North America. "The elders, the youth, the people on the street and the people behind bars are the ones who have given me the incentive to know I'm making some headway at getting the message across," he says. He dedicated the book to these people and says... "my inspiration came from you."

He has worked as a public speaker with Health Canada and with Corrections in Alberta and Saskatchewan and Ken has strong views about the spread of HIV in prisons. He says inmates should be given needles and condoms to help prevent the spread of the disease. The drugs and sex are there anyway and, as he says, prisoners should be allowed to protect themselves. Needles or even bleach can be used as weapons in jail, but Ken says, the prisoners can ensure that they are used safely. "A lot of the brothers and sisters

behind bars are responsible, believe it or not, and I think an effective way to do that (ensure safety) is with the inmates themselves." If prisoners use Aids prevention needles and materials as weapons or irresponsibly, he says the prisoners themselves will correct it. "They can use the approach of shunning. Not in a violent way, shunning would be more effective. Inmates want to get a rep (reputation), and they don't want to get a bad rep, that would be a lot more effective."

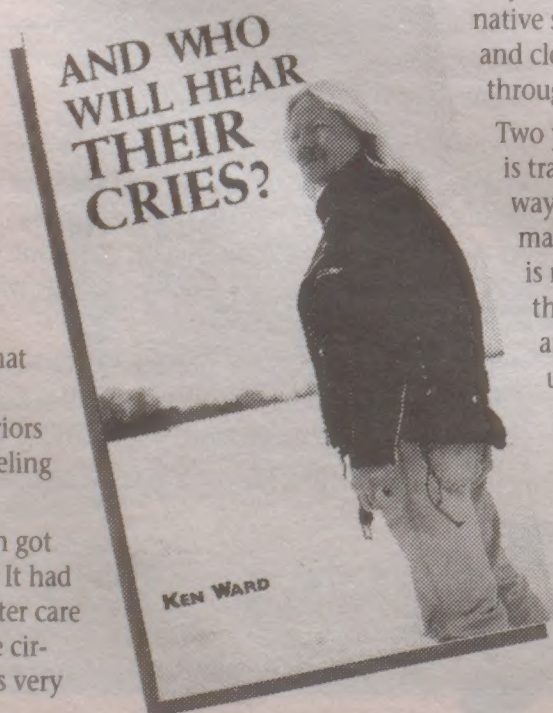
THE BOOK of Ken's poems is packaged with a video of him speaking about HIV. It is an educational kit being distributed across the country. *And Who Will Hear Their Cries?* is a collection of poems he has written over years. Not all of the poems deal directly with the illness, but all of them talk about the courage to live. The story-telling language has power in its directness. The images of native spirituality, of sweat lodges and eagle feathers are all sweet and clear. But the loneliness of illness, the trials and fears all come through too.

Two year's ago Ken's diagnosis went from HIV positive to AIDS. He is travelling less and the book and video have become another way for him to communicate to native peoples. His work now is mainly on the Enoch Band reserve west of Edmonton, where he is most concerned about young people. "They can't survive on the reserves because of the pressures, they go to the city, to the anonymity, but you can't survive there, either. They might end up on the streets, or in prostitution. Then they wind up in jail. There's a large number who end up HIV carriers."

Ken wants to break the cycle, starting with youth. "A person is going to do it for themselves, they have to choose what is good for them, what is healthy for them. I tell the young people, if you can't survive on the reserve, what makes you think you can survive on the streets?" ♦

by Keith Wiley

And Who Will Hear Their Cries? is published by Duval House Publishing in Edmonton.



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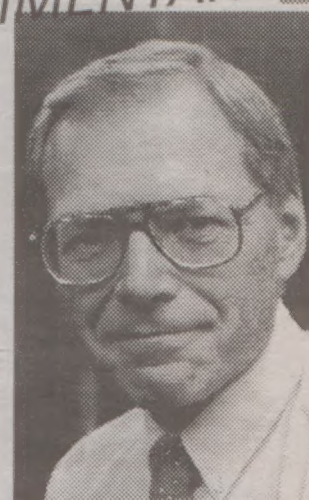
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COMMENTARY

Mark Lisak on the Premier's answers to Ten Questions



In last month's edition of **Our Voice** we took ten tough questions from people living on or close to the streets and sent these questions to Premier Klein's office.

In response to Mr. Klein's answers we have asked a number of people to comment on all or some of the answers. This issue we have a comment by Mark Lisak, a columnist on political affairs for the *Edmonton Journal*.

BY MARK LISAK

I never envy Ralph Klein his job. The forceful, real questions posed to him in **Our Voice** show how tough being a political leader can be.

On some of the questions there's a story beyond the premier's answers.

Taxes: Alberta taxes may be the lowest but the mix has been changing. Efforts to help lower income earners have been offset by fee increases, by \$500 million in VLT revenue and by the privatization of some costs. Klein's line about eliminating waste and duplication simply avoids the issue. Less money meant real cuts in service, which is why the government now finds itself putting money back into health and education at rates not seen since the 1980s.

Welfare reform: It's a complicated issue but there's little support for the claims of successful reform, even in the big report from the Canada West Foundation, an organization that's been friendly to the government. There is no persuasive evidence that the drop in the welfare caseload represents anything more than a strong economy coupled with a determination to make people depend more on friends, relatives and food banks.

Gay rights and the Supreme Court: Klein is right. He could have added that poll results cast doubt on statements like "so many of your constituents were against it."

Opposition was loud but tolerance was widespread.

The questions broadly related to poverty are much tougher.

"Why are there so many inconsistencies?" "When are you going to stop making the poor pay the rich man's debt?" "Is it really your fault or are you powerless to the wealthy?"

Questions like this go back to the Bible and Shakespeare. But the most enduring works of literature have lasted hundreds of years exactly because they raise the most human questions. And it's a human quality to want to change what seems unchangeable.

The questions indicate a powerful sense of injustice. The answers indicate good will but possibly a mind preoccupied with other matters.

This is not Premier Klein's failure. When he

tells Brenda that he and his government "listen to Albertans and are guided by what they say" he is not just spouting a line. Fifteen thousand people marched in south Edmonton a few years ago to say they wanted to keep the Grey Nuns as a full hospital. No one has marched to raise shelter allowances.

A lot of the government's choices centre on Darlene's question: "Why are single parents forced to live on next to nothing ...?"

The government has heard many times now that it's extremely important to get kids off to a good start. The first three years are crucial. Some of the strongest messages have come from a few corporate leaders like Ted Newall, chief executive of Nova Corp. These messages are backed by a growing amount of research. Good nutrition and interaction with caring adults seem to have life-long physical and emotional effects. At some point, though, taxpayers ask why money they could spend on their kids is being spent on someone else's kids. (One answer is that up to a point, everyone will be better off, including their own kids.) The government has to respond.

That said, Klein skipped over a strange contradiction. His government believes in families. But if you're a single parent, tough luck. Get out and find a job when your child is six months old.

Nor can the government point to any overall strategy that puts social issues first. Thinking along these lines gets into some deep questions. How much right do your neighbours, acting through the government, have to tell you how to live? Is government the best agency to help people? Are children in troubled families better off in foster care (a question that has plagued the Alberta government for the roughly 80 years that child welfare has existed)?

Two principles seem clear. Problems linked with poverty are best dealt with very early in life. And people stuck on welfare for some time often need a lot of patient help to teach them how to do and keep a job. Much of the help has to come from employers.

Governments all over North America have to operate in a time when many employers would rather cast off all social obligations. Klein has to work with this reality. But he never talks about these limits or tries to change them by making them politically important the way that budget deficits were politically important.

He can fairly say his government is doing what a lot of Albertans want. Others can fairly ask what his government has shown in the way of leadership to help Albertans move ahead on these issues. ♦

Talking Back **TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.**
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Love

I just wanted to talk a bit about love. It's one of the most commonly used words in our language. We hear and write songs and poetry about it. We pursue it constantly. Yet I wonder how often we really adhere to the ideal of love in our lives. We often get caught up in so many other things, like our jobs, the need to make money, our own immaturities and even tendencies to cling to illusions that came from the ideologies and romance of our youth. Of course all of these these things are important at some level, but love is often inhibited by our resistance to evolve and grow within ourselves, to realize that loving is as natural as breathing. It has to be cared for. We find people to love and people who love us and then we take it for granted, like it's so easy to overlook how important it is. It seems to me that this is very common. Love is perceived by many to be romance, but it's not romantic. It's as real as any of our other physiological functions and it has to be treated that way. We have to accept this and live our lives accordingly. We feel how much of a simple human need it is to be loved and to give love. It needs no definition or analysis. It simply is and you know it by how you feel. There's no denying it. Unfortunately if this need for love is not met, life can be very despairing and painful. It's comparable to not being able to eat properly or eliminate, or not being able to breathe well. We all know what it's like to be ill and we know how much easier it is to be ill when there is someone there who loves and cares for us. It's reassuring and relieving whether it's our mothers, partners, friends or whoever. When bad things happen to us in our lives it's easier to deal with them and wash away hurt and misfortune with the love from someone you love. So love makes living easier.

The importance of love is very evident in the inner city where life is often broken down to its most simple forms. Many people depend on love for survival. They have little else to give them peace. There are no materials or large bank accounts to act as symbols of happiness even though many people would be much happier if their lives were economically more stable. However they are not and they need something to give them peace. Love and support from others gives them the strength to continue on from day to day even though they live in desperate poverty. They realize how important love is. On the other hand, the inner city is often a last resort for people who are alone and lost in their lives. There is a concept of the stereo typical image of a lonely soul drifting through the shadows of skidrow streets looking at the dank pavement already conquered by so many other lonely footsteps. This is sad. There are real examples of this. I know people like this and they have little left to say, little gleam left in their eyes, they only walk and sit, they are unhealthy and unhappy. They seem as though they are unable to accept love anymore. It is gone for them. Their lives are lonely and empty.

Wouldn't it be marvelous if everyone was focused on loving one another; if we were able to relinquish the notion that we have a right to anything and everything at the cost of neglecting the people we were meant to share the world with? There wouldn't be as many broken people, lost and alone. We could bring out the best in all people, the love in all people. Love breeds love. The way the world is now, there are so many people living only to gain, to buy, to own all they can and yet so many people live unaccepted and unloved. We would have a much better world if we worked harder at fostering love, at making others feel good and appreciated no matter what they do or where they come from.

Michael Walters.

WOMAN WITH ROLLS ROYCE
Vancouver photographer Duncan Murdoch couldn't pass up this shot.



Editorial OPINION

Our Voice the spare change magazine

Tough questions, very fancy answers

Last month Ralph Klein, in his **Our Voice** response to ten questions from the street, talked about the "welfare reform" that has been going on in this province for the past five years. "Welfare reform" is just fancy language for what is often put far more simply: make those bums go out and get a job!

That's what the "reform" was mostly about. Some 60,000 people went off the welfare rolls, nearly two thirds of those who were on welfare, in just a couple of years. What a success! Let's consider.

"Welfare reform" was not about reform. The changes were never made to improve it as a system for aiding truly needy people. Let's call it right: it has been a hard-hearted crackdown on the province's most vulnerable people. It helped to shave a few million dollars off the tax bill, but not off your tax bill or mine. Our taxes have gone up anyway. No it's off the taxes that keep Alberta competitive, the Alberta Advantage low taxes for big businesses.

And the way those 60,000 people were "gotten rid of" has been interesting too. First off, nearly everyone on welfare was encouraged to go back to school and get job training. They could do that with a student loan, not welfare, so off they went. Never mind that after the courses ran out they had a large debt, and no guarantee of a job. But a much tougher time getting back on welfare.

Then many people were required to take employment-readiness training. And if you are late for class, oops, you had to go to class or you loose your qualification for welfare. Cut off.

That worked for many people, new regulations, tough policing, hoops to jump through that some people just don't make. Some people could appeal, but many could not handle it.

Then, of course, the government did cut the rates severely, making welfare not livable for most people. That's when we had the outcry about the exodus to BC, and, less discussed, to Saskatchewan.

The government made little effort to track what happened to the people who left the welfare roles in droves. We only have the stories of people homeless on the street, packed in with Mom and Dad, or "staying at my sister's for awhile". There's been the huge jump in demand on the Food Banks. We know what we see on the street.

Our society has a good share of victims, people bashed and battered around, and having a hard time taking care of themselves, let alone supporting themselves and holding steady on to a job. They are the most vulnerable people around. They were on welfare... but now...?

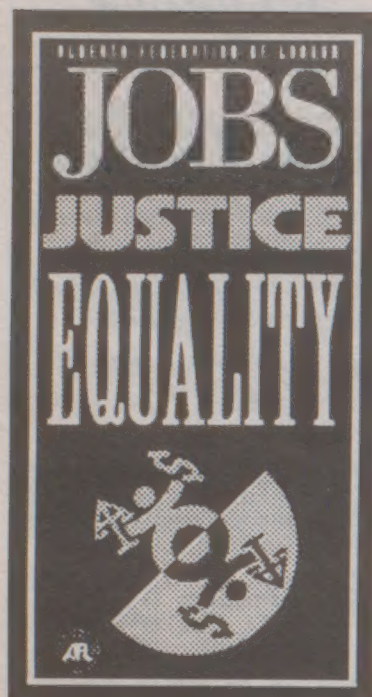
Albertans may be greatly in favour of "welfare reform". The government may encourage intolerant views of needy people. But none of that changes the circumstances for so many families. "We will continue to ensure there is help for those who need it," Mr Klein wrote. And none of those 60,000 needed it? We wonder.

Keith Wiley

A time to heal

Native
healing
circle
is a
place to
bind wounds

by Michael
Walters



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As our society has evolved, the culture of Native people has become one of pain, isolation and poverty. Many Native people living on the reservations they were forced to so many years ago, suffer with addictions and live on little money from social services or nothing at all. Many of the people who leave the reservations to look for a better way of living in a city often find themselves unable to gain acceptance and are drawn to the inner cities. There they live in poverty and often fuel their dependency on alcohol and drugs. Many Natives end up in jail at some point in their lives. Their

include activities such as sweats, sun dances, sweet grass picking and various other native ceremonies.

"The effect that the circles may have of course depends on the individual. Some people have come to the circles being quite lost and since have been able to straighten out. They will make good choices in putting their lives back together. There is a program called the NECHI program out at Poundmakers (rehabilitation centre for Natives) that allows people to become counsellors. Others come and stay for awhile then disappear. It's the nature of the group," says Miller.

Samuel Shirt is the presiding Elder at the Bissell Circle. "A lot of people come to express issues and they do it for themselves. The elder will talk a bit about a feeling for example, such as anger. We can help people see where that anger is coming from and how to deal with it. We are all the same spiritually. We all come from Mother Earth. She was given to us to take care of her and to do that we have to take care of ourselves. We are supposed to live a life of love, peace, honour, honesty and harmony. We take what we need and leave the rest, giving back what we can. When we were assimilated we lost a lot of ourselves. We lost many components of our relationship with our Mother. If something is missing from our Earth, from ourselves, we grow sick. I don't think of it as a culture now. It's a



spirits and bodies become poisoned with chemicals, desperation and rage.

Healing circles try to put people back in touch with the peace in themselves and their culture. They are a rekindling of spirits and understanding. They provide an outlet, a means to an expression of their pains and their lives.

"The focus is spiritual, things that come from within. It's a forum which people in a supportive environment can express what has happened to them in the past, present, their fears and hopes," says Jim Miller coordinator of the healing circles held at the Bissell Centre in Edmonton Wednesday nights.

There is always an elder who presides at each circle. The elders are there to offer support and spiritual counseling. The circles are gender specific, but are open to anyone regardless of ethnicity. This helps people understand across cultures and breaks down misunderstandings between cultures. The circles

way of life."

The healing circles are open to all nations, though people who come under the influence of alcohol or drugs are not encouraged to take part in the ceremonies.

"They are of another spirit when they are over-indulged in drinking and getting high. It is no use for them to be there. They cannot possibly achieve the spirit that we seek or the focus on wellness that is so important," says Shirt.

Purity and being centered is vital to the healing circles. There is a smudge ritual that provides this for those involved. It is an incense. There are a lot of things that are not clean. The hands, eyes, ears and the heart. One must smudge himself to have cleanliness and purity before touching the sacred pipe and before talking to the creator. It is a matter of self-respect and respect for that which protects them. ♦

Personal reflections on "Meet the Street"

by K.A. King

I was a participant May 29-30, 1998, in The Mustard Seed Church's first annual "Meet the Street" Street-a-thon in Edmonton. The focus was to heighten awareness of the needs of the less fortunate in Edmonton's inner city and to raise funds for The Mustard Seed to respond to those needs.

My motivation was probably a little different than most. I decided to participate in memory of my daughter, Cara, who lost her life on those same streets some time last August. She was a victim in her life as well as her death and had been missing almost a month before her body was found.

A turning point in our lives was 1994 when my family doctor kindly advised me that Cara, though legally adult, would probably never be employable and that AISH support would be appropriate. This was hard to accept because she was an attractive and likable young lady.

The next few years were new learning for me as I tried to understand the forces that had been put in motion at the moment of her conception. These disadvantages were stronger than my abilities as a parent to change them. I soon realized my helplessness to protect her was shared by many professionals who worked within relatively narrow mandates.

I still look for explanations to make sense of her life and hope that others with multiple handicaps can be better understood and supported by helping services. The questions are difficult and the resolutions more

complex than "all they need..." theorists would like to believe.

As I prepared for my street-a-thon, all the old anger and frustration came back. I had never wanted to explore the inner city after midnight and since Cara's death, I had not revisited many of the agencies where she was known. I initially decided to use "Meet the Street" as an opportunity to raise some of my concerns against the many systems that had failed her. I drafted a position statement and held a couple of press interviews.

Then as I walked the streets for many hours that night, a surprising sense of calm resulted. I thought of the many people who had truly tried to be helpful and was grateful for their efforts. Cara's tragic death, though predicted, was beyond the power of any one person to prevent. I started my walk hoping to get some answers, and the answer I received was a whisper, "It's over. Let me rest in peace."

Yes, it is over for my daughter, the once friendly little girl who liked gymnastics and horses and having a good time. Cara was born with a personality she did not choose, never matured to functional adulthood, and never found a place where she felt she belonged. People in "normal" society didn't understand her limitations and people on the street would say, "She's a nice girl, she doesn't belong here."

Cara (meaning "friend") lived her life in her own way because there was no legal provision to protect her from her own inadequacies. She touched many lives with her unique personality and her ability to have fun. She was a child-like spirit in a woman's body, caught in a vortex of psychiatric prob-

lems and drug use.

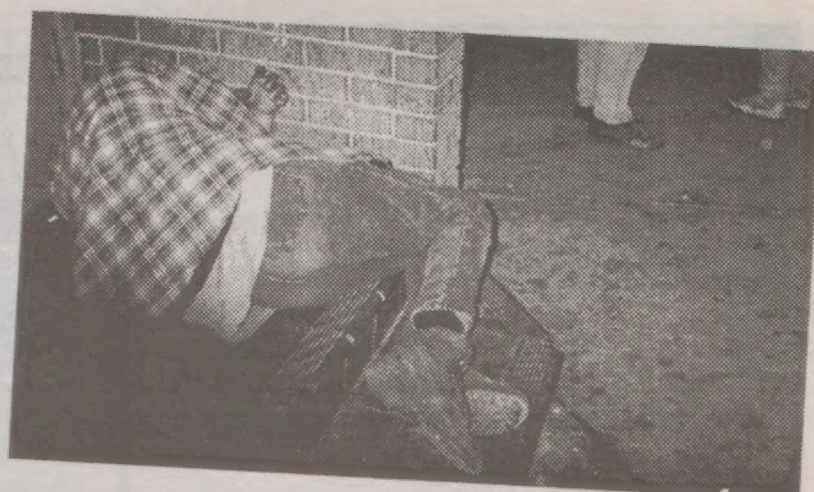
My task in carrying on is to find the balance between letting go and keeping her memory alive. I want to move beyond my own grief and anger to build hope for others. I believe that we who are educated and capable and aware have a responsibility to protect the disadvantaged from lives of destruction.

The challenges are as big as our world - war, famine, poverty, child abuse, sexual abuse, hatred, violence, inequality, slavery, prejudice, addictions. The change begins in our hearts. Wherever we are, whatever we do, we can choose to act from compassion rather than censure. We can seek to build "bridges" for those who fall through the cracks of existing services rather than exclude them by emphasis on "boundaries."

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all who supported Cara on the difficult journey of her life and those who have supported me in my grief. Special thanks as well to the Sherwood Park RCMP who honor her life by continuing to investigate her murder.

K.A. King is a helping professional employed with a private agency. She believes writing is an important tool for healing, education and awareness.

PHOTOS: JOHN ZAPANTIS



This is the 3rd installment of Lance's personal story from his diary. Following our April story on mental illness, we are giving space for Lance's own words, which he says is the best way to describe what he continues to go through.

The memory came from 1970, the year I was supposed to be born. Two of my uncles invaded my pop's house in Edmonton. My step-mother let them in along with their various assorted scum friends, drug dealers, prostitutes, pimps, the such, approximately eleven people. They attacked my father and disabled him with a massive blow to the head. Then they proceeded to rape and batter my step-mother. This continued on through the remainder of the night.

Over the next six years, my Uncles molested, beat, programmed, and robbed my immediate family making my father brainwash himself into committing ludicrous and dangerous acts to in effect protect his family from harm. Meanwhile he was void of the knowledge of two facts.

1. His wife had already betrayed him.
2. The lives of myself and my brother Kenneth were destined to be absent of truth from that point on. From then on



he was known to us as an uncle and he too believed this. One of my uncles took the role of my father.

It's all very complicated and deals solely with power and certain satanic religious beliefs.

Then of course I realized, as I stood outside that house in Blackfalds that I was much older and it was clear. I was born in 1938 not in 1970. I knew this now. The brainwashing and programming had made me metamorphically change my face by the pressure of thought. I didn't look like I was in my fifties, but I had retained my youth, which revealed to me the power in my

life I once again had control over.

As to all of these memories, at first it was just the same image forced into my inner vision, possibly a mix of interfacing commands that were suppressing these lucid images that bore themselves so fearful and full of hate.

Over the past three years I have begun learning how to piece myself together while determining which of the memories are falsely derived by my inner consciousness at my uncles behest for the false safety of my family and story continuity. This meant cutting out memory and consciously pasting new memory under hypnosis and

the effects of certain mind-numbing drugs.

I am at the point where I have brought myself from the pressure and drug-induced void filled with but a few years of fractured images and sounds. It is at this point that I have truly started to come out of this delirium and have begun to react with my environment again, instead of spending many countless hours staring into the void. I have determined large pieces of truth and have been putting them together like a jigsaw puzzle.

My memories and life were stolen from me and my family because of power and control desired by other members of my family.

It is because of certain modern drugs and my own desire for power over my life and need for balance that I have been able to deal with all of these fractures and tragedies. I have begun to process the traces of truth. There are still parts missing, but it's an attempt at a full scale recovery and accomplishment of external and internal truth. ♦

This concludes Lance's diary. He is still struggling with all of these questions and thoughts that are powerful realities for him to live with.



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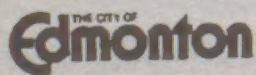
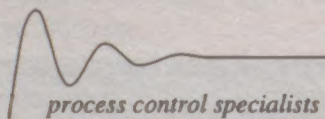
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POETRY



Tears

The tears I cry for my people
roll down my sunbaked face and
mud the dry dirt at my feet.

I give you my tears Mother Earth
in thanks
for after all the pain
I still shall never forget the life
you gave the Indian
and the love the Indian
will always give you.

Michael Flowercloud

Circle

A drum beaten with a piano hand
mimics her human heartbeats
tangents slants continuous rhythm keeps.
Comfortable strangers are silent
another hand joins.
Intimate diversity streathes the wave.
Energy resounds, fires crack
smoke enhances, we rise gathered
instruments appear only in the dark
admired under flickering light
translating infinity from absolute zero.
Music bounces off sanctified valley slopes.
Vessels are warm with vivid force
vibrations tingle naked hairs.
People are dancing frantic
Dogs are wagging wild
without effort, howling trips ecstatic.
Peer back into a lineage with rhyme
flail in control, shake in trance
holding the line beyond a single not sur-
faces
trickling toward calm bodies reverberate
quavery justifies beginning again.

Anonymous

Significant

I stand with my raven free eyes
watching the spruce needles
pirouette through the spirited air
as the winds turn the glorious green
cone into a tornado.
Nature is a stage of truth
an unheard sage in the world
of steel.
Nature is honest and its visions
of its survival are the storms
that frighten our children.
Hang on dear Mother.
Please withstand the torture
and as I lay my palm on your soft
belly
I feel your significance, your warmth,
your life.

Michael Flowercloud

Old pond
frog jumps in-
sound of water

Basho

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Always empty the bottle out the sunroof?

People have been doing some strange things at the wheels of their cars. In Newcastle, England a judge was stopped by police after they spotted him shaving while driving at 70 mph. Equally bizarre were events in Texas, where a man almost died after trying to urinate in a Coke can at 100 mph. Charles Marshall, 45, of Houston, was rushing to a meeting when disaster struck. "I was on the freeway and suddenly needed to pee," explained Mr Marshall. "I didn't have time to stop, so I decided to do it in an

empty Coke can I had on the dashboard." He duly unzipped and, after some initial splashing, managed to empty his aching bladder into the receptacle. Had he left it at that things might have been OK. Unfortunately, having filled the can he then tried to empty it out of his sunroof, only for the urine to blow back all over his face causing him to lose control of his car, which ploughed through a fence and into bean field. "He's always doing things like that," sighed Mr Marshall's wife Eunice.

Even acupuncture can't sleep off these jitters

It's all been going horribly wrong with sleep. In Italy, a contaminated water supply has caused an entire village to fall asleep. "Sleep has ruined our lives," yawned one victim. Likewise that of Australian Cameron Bertus, 31, of Sydney, who has the unfortunate habit of falling asleep whenever he's nervous. Mr Bertus' affliction first manifested itself during school exams. "It hit me as soon as I sat down," he explained. "I tried to fight it, but it was too strong and I just dozed off on the desk. I only

woke when they started collecting the papers at the end." Since then the least hint of worry has sent Mr Bertus into a deep slumber. Job interviews invariably culminate with snoring on the floor of the interview room, and at his own wedding he keeled over while taking his vows. Nothing seems to help his condition, and he has now resigned himself to a life of incurable somnolence. "I did think acupuncture might help," he explained, "but I got so nervous about it, I fell asleep and missed the appoint-

And just you stay there and whirl some more

Jacuzzi alert! In Bournemouth, a man drowned after being overpowered by chlorine fumes in a Jacuzzi he was using. In Australia, meanwhile, a husband got trapped in a Jacuzzi because its swirl was so strong he couldn't get out. Alan Flutterbliss, 62, of Sydney was staying in a hotel with wife Margo when disaster struck. "They had a Jacuzzi in the basement," he recalled, "and I asked Margo if I could try it. Normally she doesn't let me do things on my own but because we were on holiday she said yes, on condition I was back in time for din-

ner." an excited Mr Flutterbliss duly put the Jacuzzi on 'full whirl' and immersed himself therein, only to find, when he tried to get out, that the eddy was so strong he kept getting sucked back again. For two hours he spun round and round until eventually he was discovered by his wife, who had come down to find him. "I said 'Help me, Margo'," recalled Mr Flutterbliss, "but she said I'd made my pool and now I must whirl in it, and left me there for another hour. She can be very strict sometimes."

Police egg on thieves in Peruvian tunnel heist

Thieves have been committing crimes right under the noses of the police. In Italy, two men robbed a bank situated right next door to a police station. Still more audacious were the Peruvian bank robbers who tunnelled into a bank whilst the crack police surveillance unit stood by and watched. The robbery took place in Lima, where detectives were monitoring a bank after a tip-off it was about to be robbed. "We'd been told it would be an armed robbery," said a police spokesman, "So when they came dressed as sewage maintenance engineers and began digging we had no reason to suspect them." For the

next three days, the policemen kept a constant watch on the bank whilst beside them the chuckling thieves slowly tunnelled their way into the vault, all the while urged on by the police, who were worried the digging might deter their real quarry. Only when the bank's manager emerged one morning to inform the police his safe was empty did the penny drop, but by then it was too late and the robbers had escaped. "To think you can't even trust municipal waste engineers anymore," sighed one officer, despondently.

Articles compiled by Paul Sussman in *The Big Issue*, London, England's street-sold magazine.

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JOHN'S STYLE FILE JUSTIN CROSS

John Zapantis Our Voice vendor, writer and photographer meets the most interesting people.



Street art is street justice for twenty-four-year-old Justin Cross who discovered his talent from a need to interpret his emotions on paper. It was his therapy while conquering a recent 6 month battle with heavy drinking.

"When I was drinking, my art became a way for me to vent my feelings. It helped. I got everything out and I was able to get back to normal."

Before discovering street art, Justin had established a name for himself in certain Calgary art circles. While an art student at a Calgary high school, one of his teachers recognized his talents. This prompted the teacher to promote and display Justin's work at an art series in the Calgary City Hall,

accompanied by the drawings of other talented young artists.

Justin says that his art is instrumental in pulling him from his occasional emotional ruts.

"It gives me a purpose and a creative outlet. It keeps me inspired."

On the street, Justin is all etiquette and class when it comes to handling the people who confront him. He has to deal with the occasional rude and ignorant remark from people who pass by him.

"I prefer to be polite because to me if people are ignorant, it's not really my problem, it's theirs. If they don't have an open mind, why should I be concerned about it." ♦

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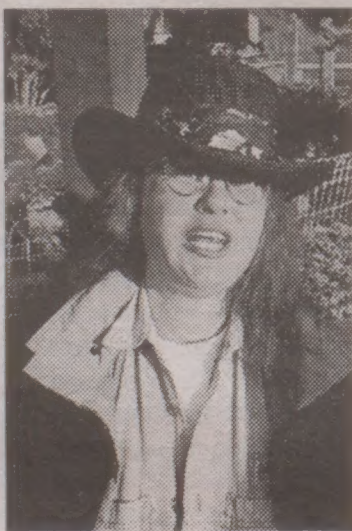
Pat Caponi, author of Dispatches from the Poverty Line visits Alberta's skid rows

Edmonton was just one stop along the way for Pat Caponi, author of *Dispatches From the Poverty Line* and *Upstairs in the Crazy House*. Caponi is visiting cities across Canada to gather material for her upcoming book about, what else, people living in poverty.

"I'm doing a book on poverty in Canada for Penguin," Caponi said, "They're sending me across Canada. My last stop will be St. John's where poverty doesn't feel so stigmatized."

Caponi visited Vancouver before coming to Edmonton. "I'm still blown away at downtown east Vancouver," she said, "East Hastings and Main. When I came here I thought, Oh Thank God, things aren't so bad here. At first I was relieved."

She has a definite purpose in writing this book. "If we can show that in Canada there's a war on the poor..." Caponi said, "and I have serious trouble with



Author Pat Caponi,
PHOTO: John Zapantis

the amount of agencies that are spinning their wheels."

About writing her books, she said, "*Upstairs* was easier to write. I was living in a psychiatric boarding-house. *Dispatches* was hard because I had no money. With this book, it's easier because I have an allowance."

Upstairs in the Crazy House is about Caponi's experiences as a mental patient. In *Dispatches from the Poverty Line* she tells people's stories about living in poverty.

"With *Dispatches*, people told me it made them feel better to see their names in there," she said.

Her next book will be coming out in a hard cover edition next fall. ♦
by Linda Dumont



Bike battles dirty windows

Continued from
back cover

"In fact, the idea for the bike and trailer occurred to me while in a rehab centre here in Winnipeg. When I was down and out and living in Nova Scotia, I would rummage through garbage cans in the alleys," he said. "A fellow patient at the centre mentioned that he cleaned windows for spare change - I just combined the two ideas. I used to pull a pushcart behind a bicycle, it worked quite well actually - I even went out to the industrial park in Dartmouth and rummaged through the garbage there," Don said.

Life has not always been so good to Don Lockhart, however. "I've battled anxiety all my life, and depression - I was suicidal many times," Don said. "I was in and out of rehabs when I first came to Winnipeg, my doctor was trying different medications on me but none seemed to work very well. It seemed as if the hounds of depression were out to destroy my life. At the age of forty the battle turned ugly and 'made me lose my \$60,000 a year job and caused my divorce as well. I had a very good job - As regional sales manager for Meridian Publishing in New York State, I had ten salesmen under me, but because I couldn't handle the mad dog of depression, I lost it all," Don said, "that's when I ended up rummaging through garbage cans in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia - then I came here after about a year."

"The medication I have to take seems to be working quite well now, I'm looking ahead optimistically."

"Looking towards the future, I can see a Canada-wide franchise," Don says, "Winnipeg could take about eight or ten more bike units."

Asked about upgrading to trucks, Don answers, "No way, -it will be bikes and bike trailers only- people really appreciate the idea of a pollution free mode of transport. The fact that it's novel helps too. Sure, some people are snobs and say, 'well, park the trailer in the backyard while you do the work,' - they don't want their neighbors to see my 'garbage rummaging' trailer in front of their middle class house. But most people have good attitudes about me - I think they want to help a guy who's maybe struggling to make a go of it, and I want to leave the bike unit the way it is - I have about six old ten speeds I bought from the Salvation Army in my yard, I will use them for spare parts. It's such a good idea, (the trailer made from bicycle parts), there are copy-cats around now, but they use their trailers for other things, just to carry things and what not."

Harry Minn is Don's first full-time employee and he is excited too, he's on the ground floor of a sparkling new company.

"It's great," Harry says. "Don pays quite well too. Not long ago everyone used a similar type of contraption - the Red River Carts." ♦



IN EDMONTON

John Zapantis

I've been selling **Our Voice** since the 9th of December 1996. I first discovered **Our Voice** when it was originally called "Spare Change".

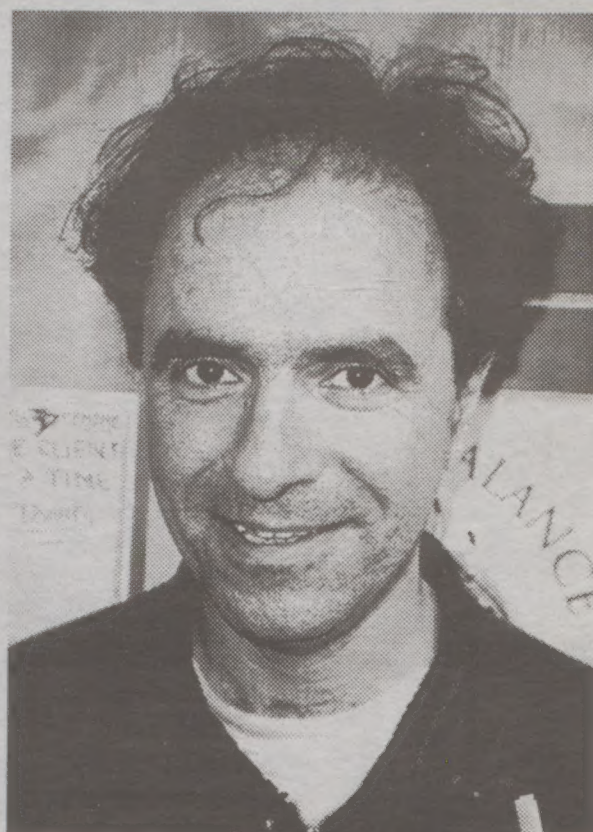
It was sometime in May of 1995 that an overly talkative and friendly vendor named Cecil Garfin persistently tried to convince me to sell the paper.

So I decided to buy a copy of the paper and I was intrigued by the array of social issues and the incentive local writers were given to share their experiences with homelessness, unemployment and other issues.

I began to write for **Our Voice** and my first story, about my own experience with homelessness, was published in August 1995.

Our Voice has become a focal point of my life. Being a regular contributor has empowered my expression and given me the confidence to write for other local papers as well.

Vending has taught me how to be assertive when greeting passers-by and has given me self-esteem when dealing with others. Above all it allows me to be independent. ♦



**VENDOR
Profile**

IN CALGARY

Peter Williams

For Peter Williams selling **Our Voice** in Calgary is the best job he's ever had. He joined on last September when he was trying to get food and clothes and stuff. He saw the sign, and signed up. Peter sells in Forest Lawn, and "by my district in Killarney, and sometimes downtown."

Peter has a reputation as the "most improved" vendor. The job has really connected him socially.

"I think it's a very good magazine," says Peter. "It does help the people on the streets." ♦



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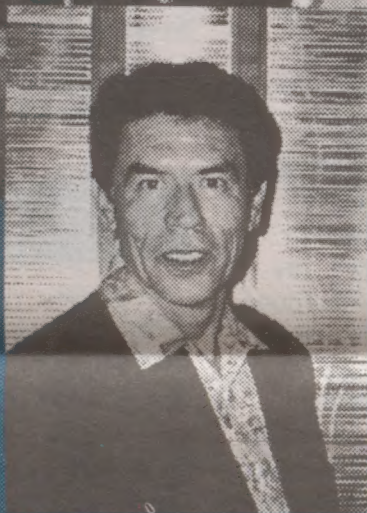


Michael Horse starred in *Dances with Wolves*.

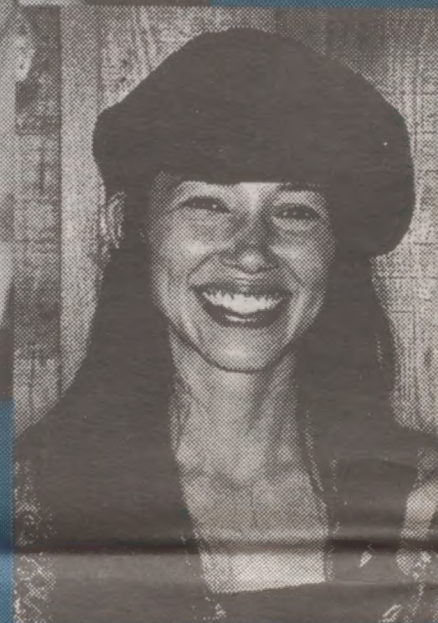


ABOVE: Everyone on stage for the awards celebration was just part of the excitement at the 3rd annual film awards and arts festival, Dreamspeakers, held in Edmonton at the beginning of June. This year's event brought in aboriginal musicians and stars from around the world, including New Zealand's Maree Sheehan, Aaron Peters, Errol Ranville and the C-Weed Band and much more.

PHOTOS BY PATTY KENNEDY



Wes Studi, who received a special award, starred in *Geronimo*.



It's an honour to be invited to Dreamspeakers and to visit Edmonton and my Canadian people, Irene Bedard told *Our Voice*. The American actress starred in *Lakota Woman*.



With a bike he battles dirty windows now

BY RODNEY GRAHAM

Don Lockhart is cycling down the road to success - but a few short years ago he was rummaging through garbage cans in alleyways. Using a ten-speed bike he bought at the Salvation Army, and pulling a homemade trailer built from bicycle parts - he goes to work daily, washing windows in the Wolseley district of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"I started three years ago," Don said, "I went door to door to drum up my clients, mostly from businesses. I started just to make a few extra bucks for food and cigarettes then it really took off when I canvassed residents. Now I have two bikes and one full time employee. Since last summer it has really grown to the point where there's more work than I can do, I need more workers, to handle it. 'I've become so successful, I'm buying my own house,' says the forty-seven year old.

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